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On the Outskirts: How French Suburbs Face Disproportionate Inequality

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Introduction

France has been coming under fire for many of its cultural structures that alienate those who do not fit the typical mold of a Frenchmen. Despite its revolutionary spirit, the country continues to seek to quash any individualities within its society. Many of these culture feuds have taken place in the last 60 years, with the great influx of immigrants from Maghreb, northern African countries previously colonized by France, or the Caribbean, former Atlantic colonial sites of France. As Alexander Stille notes, "During periods of economic expansion, France was happy to have inexpensive foreign laborers for its factories and unskilled jobs, housing them in out-of-the way housing projects on the periphery of its major cities. But then the French economy slowed down, unemployment rose, and France woke up to an underclass of people who were physically and culturally isolated from the mainstream."¹ The nature of the influx of immigrants, and their cultures, created a social order of importance that has minimized any influences that could be perceived as non-French, which typically means non-white (Stille, 2014). Along these lines, France has banned ostentatious religious items from public schools and federal workplaces. This ban has largely influenced Muslims as the hijab, head scarf worn by women in the religion, is what spurred the law to be enacted in the first place. France's oversimplistic look at identities within its society, and disregard for the importance of individualistic rights has bolstered their racially blind political and societal culture.

Racism is alive and well, but when minorities are pushed out of the cities and blocked off by neighborhood boundaries, is it still possible to address societal issues when you can't see

¹ Stille, Alexander. "Can the French Talk About Race?" The New Yorker , July 11, 2014. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/can-the-french-talk-about-race>.

them? This paper seeks to understand French metropolitan life and look at the existing inequality in racial structures and how the negative effects are exacerbated by geographic location which subsequently lowers quality of life and opportunities available for social and economic mobility. The goal is both to add to the current discourse of racial studies, specifically in France, as well as to add an economic standpoint to cultural and integration studies. In shedding light on these sections of French society, the research contributes to discussion about how to drive political change in France that will encourage economic growth outside of the restricted Paris arrondissements and advocate for increased equality across geographic districts.

Through studying *banlieues*, their structures and influence on the individual, this paper will prove physical and structural policies perpetuate racial and economic disenfranchisement in France. In the following sections this paper will briefly inform the reader of France's current racial climate, and how the most negative eruptions of civil unrest grow in the *banlieues*, while also commenting on literature surrounding France's societal and political climate and scholarly work focused on relations studies. Later it will address the shortcomings of studies taking place in France and the importance of continued scholarly analysis and explanations of French society's expectations of its citizens. Through discourse analysis of interviews, conducted by magazine writers and subsequently published in notable magazines like TIME, with people of diverse backgrounds who live in French *banlieues*, and visual analysis of Paris maps, namely the public transportation availability map, in this paper, the reader will uncover the hidden aspects of French society including the continued disenfranchisement of minorities that are within the *banlieues*.

Research Problem

The official census in France does not include data on race and ethnicity because of the French cultural conception of being “French,” which requires a person to connect with a singular identity rather than a mix of them. Therefore the government does not have a full grasp on racial and ethnic problems within the country, nor do they speak to them as it is considered divisive to their culture.² The lack of government data is a problem in and of itself, however the lack of information does not stop with government statistics but also private studies. The ‘Conseil Représentatif des Associations Noires’ informs “...it is legal to undertake a survey or research which doesn’t maintain record (no link between a person and a sensitive data should be filed).”³ The lack of tied data does not encourage French research around racial marginalization which therefore forces scholars and researchers to code these data differently. Therefore in the research presented in this paper, economic and social issues that are typically associated with discriminated minorities, must be looked at in accordance with physical groupings, such as suburbs, *banlieues*, because their history and construction points to large populations of minorities.

Due to their distance from the political epicenter, *banlieues*, usually with high immigrant populations, do not draw the political attention necessary to better their lives with the help of the government, and its willful ignorance of the racial problems faced by second or third generation immigrants does not bring the economic support the areas need.⁴ Therefore, Parisien suburbs

² Mohammad A. Chaichian, *Empires and Walls: Globalization, Migration, and Colonial Domination* (Brill, 2013), 156-160.

³ Debow, Kay. "Blacks in France are Invisible." National Black Chamber of Commerce. Accessed November 27, 2017. <http://www.nationalbcc.org/news/beyond-the-rhetoric/457-blacks-in-france-are-invisible>.

⁴ Rousset, Simon. *THE MARGINALIZATION OF PEOPLE LIVING IN FRENCH BANLIEUES: A CO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF MEDIA DISCOURSE IN LA HAINE AND NEWSPAPERS*. Master's thesis,

such as Clichy-sous-bois, Villiers-le-Bel, and Corbeil Essonnes, are faced with increased violence, high unemployment, and lesser quality of life daily. They are disenfranchised to integrate fully into French society, continuing a division created in the first wave of immigration, and France is incapable of drawing bridges through economic or cultural support because of the blind eye it has to minorities within.

Literature Review

There is a lot of literature, both scholarly as well as news, that focuses on the physical division between *banlieues* and the cities of France and how that affects the opportunities available to those living in the poorer neighborhoods. A strong example of these cultural borders is the *peripherique*, a highway that encircles the entirety of the city of Paris; this limits its border to the 18 arrondissements inside and cutting of the neighborhoods on the outside. However, in order to discuss how this physical boundary exacerbates the idea of “us vs them” in French society, seen in both cities of the insiders and outsiders, and on a national scale of those who ascribe to the single French identity and those one hold onto others, we must look at how the French define civic nationality and how that still allows for a divisive community based on physical appearance and common histories.⁵

Michael Ignatieff (1995) defines civic nationalism as a common citizenship regardless of ethnicity, race, color, religion, gender, or language. It bases itself on equal citizens who bear civic rights and subscribe to a shared set of political values, i.e. democracy, which usually

University of Wisconsin, 2011. Accessed December 5, 2017.
http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1943&context=gs_rp.

⁵ Susan Ireland, "Les Banlieues de l'identite: Urban Geography and Immigrant Identities ," in French Literature in/and the City, vol. XXIV, French Literature Series (Amsterdam, 1997: Rodopi), 178-179.

manifests in a democratic state.⁶ Despite the inclusive nature of Ignatieff's definition, the French's use of civic nationalism does not translate well for practical use, in that it alienates those with a different family history within peer groups whose values have been born under a different state, or typically in revolt to the French imposition in Maghreb countries. Despite equivalent involvement in French society, currently, those of immigrant background do not enjoy the same integration into French society as those with long family origins, colloquially known as "Francais de souche" or "French of stump" indicating strong family tree "roots" in France.⁷

In *Empires and Walls: Globalization, Migration and Colonial Domination*, Chaichian (2013) looks at the lack of affirmative action in France and how that ultimately disenfranchises those in the *banlieues* that are affected most by racial discrimination and economic strife. During the mass immigration of North African workers into France, known as Les Trentes Glorieuses, the 30 years of economic growth due to labor infusion from previous colonial lands, many immigrants were forced into a de facto physical segregation because of the only open housing options being in the suburbs of big cities with large and decrepit apartment complexes. The *banlieues* were created because of their proximity to the industrial factories were located, but the conditions of the neighborhoods, and the lack of leisurely activities available to inhabitants created a dreary living situation for immigrants coming to France⁸. Chaichian notes the historical roots of the *banlieues* and working situations of immigrants has negatively translated into French culture today, as a potential factor of shame in employment opportunities, academic life, and potential cultural impact. The economic power that the French government had over

⁶ Hill, Richard. "Civic Nationalists, Ethnic Nationalists." Problems in International Development Course Syllabus. Accessed October 23, 2017. <https://msu.edu/user/hillrr/161lec16.htm>.

⁷ Chaichian, *Empires and Walls*, 157.

⁸ Chaichian, *Empires and Walls*, 161.

immigrants and the second-rate citizenship many experienced has continued despite the generational influences the French have had on Maghrebi cultures within France. The lack of racially/ethnically targeted aid due to lack of information, has led to a degrading government and public opinion of the geographic regions where aid is targeted that happen to align with clusters of similar people. Chaichian argues that the next generation born of immigrants, informally called Beurs, and are becoming more politically active pervasive. Despite not identifying as North African, they are still alienated from French society. This illustrates that the political definition of civic citizenship in France does not translate to personal interactions between those of French origin and those who are, or related to someone, from another country origin.

Matthew Moran (2011) examines the violent riots that erupted in the *banlieues* of Paris in response to police violence in both 2005 and 2007 and the reasons behind them.⁹ Moran finds that the ethnic makeup of these suburbs and the invasive police presence of *banlieues*, which paired with high poverty rates and unemployment rates, cause a divisive culture between periphery and core. The continuous political, social, and economic disenfranchisement of those who live in the *banlieues* (banlieusards) led to the riots that erupted after police violence in the suburbs as a cry for help. Moran further points out that the cultural changes that have been made within the *banlieues* as generations become more deeply rooted in France itself is not reflected in the public perception of those from *banlieues*. Moreover, the constant discrimination due to their home address is enhanced by the media illustrations of those from the *banlieues* and the rhetoric that political leaders, such as former President Sarkozy, used to describe those who rioted. He referred to the youth that lived in the *banlieue* of Clichy-Sous-Bois as thugs and “rabble.” G.

⁹ Matthew Moran, "Opposing Exclusion: The Political Significance of the Riots in French Suburbs (2005–2007)," *Modern & Contemporary France* 19, no. 3 (September 14, 2011): , doi:10.1080/09639489.2011.588793.

Raymond argues that his” aggressive rhetoric contributed to the perception that riots in the *banlieues* had no socio-economic causes but were pure acts of thuggery which had to be dealt with by the police accordingly.”¹⁰ Sarkozy’s ability to characterize them as thugs shows the role that race plays in the social divisions that is hidden in racial blindness through *banlieue* characterization. The media’s and politicians’ role in disenfranchisement is also analyzed by Léonard in respect to the 2005 riots.¹¹

Sarkozy’s and the media’s divisive rhetoric created a strategic “us versus them” mentality within the French population with the sense of racial polarization, without indicating the use of race as a differentiator. Laura Costelloe uses extractions to target specific wordage used during the 2005 riots to draw a clear separation between the cultured French and the rioting ‘delinquents’ within the *banlieues*.¹² She speculates that the creation of divided society was used by the government to avoid responsibility being placed on the systems and institutions that allowed for the marginalization, and subsequent police violence, to erupt in the first place. While the state placed a divider between those involved and those looking in from the outside, those on the outside did not fight for the state to create a sound solution for a problem the state created and should be held liable for. The lack of liability taken by the state not only delegitimizes the concerns and grievances that those living in the *banlieues* have, it diminishes the real violence they face every day solely because of their geographic location. Costelloe speculates the calculated choices that creating conflicting goals within french society during the riots was a way

¹⁰ Raymond, Gino. *The Sarkozy presidency: breaking the mould?* 51. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

¹¹ Marie Des Neiges Léonard, "The Effects of Political Rhetoric on the Rise of Legitimized Racism in France: The Case of the 2005 French Riots," *Critical Sociology* 42, no. 7-8 (2016): , doi:10.1177/0896920515580175.

¹² Laura Costelloe, "Discourses of sameness: Expressions of nationalism in newspaper discourse on French urban violence in 2005," *Discourse & Society* 25, no. 3 (2014): 321-323; 334-336, doi:10.1177/0957926513519533.

to place blame on the victims rather than acknowledge the state's failures to protect those that are at a disadvantage.

Luca Daconte takes the socially constructed use of marginalization and defines it through a theoretical framework called the "Neighborhood Effects Thesis".¹³ This is defined as "independent, separable effects on life chances that arise from living in a particular neighbourhood."¹⁴ This thesis effectively creates a definition for the missed opportunities of those living in the *banlieues* and the ultimate effect that takes on their life. The thesis incorporates a variety of potential opportunities that are irretrievable due to instances associated with geographic limitations. These impediments include the isolating nature of the *banlieues* and the limited access to transportation to reach more economic opportunities, the limited social networks available within the neighborhoods and the cyclical nature of economic and social prospects within a community which overall worsens the social conditions that those living in *banlieues* are faced with and must creatively use to their advantage to gain any foothold to socially or economically prop themselves up. Daconte refutes the idea that the neighborhood effects thesis is reflected in the relationship between *banlieues* and cities. He states that the welfare state that exists in France and the potential positives that can be encompassed in social polarization do not indicate that the neighborhood effects thesis is valid in France, and other european countries.¹⁵ Despite his skepticism that the neighborhood effects thesis can be attributed to the reasoning of the socio-economic disadvantages that are faced by those living in the *banlieues*, the overlap between geographic exclusion and economic deficiencies within

¹³ Luca Daconte, "Living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods: only negative Effects? The role of the spatial dimension in the French urban sensible areas.," *Sociologia Urbana E Rurale*, no. 103 (2014): , doi:10.3280/sur2014-103006.

¹⁴ Daconte, *Living in Disadvantaged Neighborhoods*, 83.

¹⁵ Daconte, *Living in Disadvantaged Neighborhoods*, 84-87.

France create cause to consider the thesis further. Because of his clear stance against the use of neighborhood effects thesis relative to the *banlieues* in France, this paper rejects the argument of Daconte and effectively works to prove the opposite of his argument.

Concurrently, Ireland uses biographies, which describe individuals' experiences within the *banlieues* and the effects they felt because of their geographic location, to suggest that physical attributes of *banlieues* have an affect on the potential of those trapped within them.¹⁶ The phrase "les murs de la cité, comme les murs d'une prison bouchaient l'horizon" (the walls of the suburb, like the walls of a prison blocking the horizon)¹⁷ indicates the trauma and emotional damages that the physical attributes of their neighborhoods cause. The constant views of grey concrete create a grayscale future where those with potential cannot see beyond the barriers they face on a day to day basis. She goes on to describe a situation where people carry the identity of the banlieue with them no matter where they go because of the mud on their shoes which categorizes them not based on their personal identifiers but the physical weight of the *banlieues* they carry on their feet.¹⁸ The metaphor of the physical boundaries in *banlieues* as prison walls represents the inescapable lower status forced on the inhabitants of the *banlieues* because of where they live and the physical encumbrances that are not easily left behind.

Research Question

The historic roots connected with the *banlieues* were doomed to haunt the migrants who first settled there; this was the beginning of racially charged divisions began which have carried over through the decades. The French people who inhabit the *banlieues* have been ranked as

¹⁶ Susan Ireland, "Les Banlieues de l'identite: Urban Geography and Immigrant Identities ," in French Literature in/and the City, vol. XXIV, French Literature Series (Amsterdam, 1997: Rodopi), 178-179.

¹⁷ Ireland, 178.

¹⁸ Ireland, 179.

second class citizens and political discourse has proved that. The decrepit state of the buildings, the severe lack of economic prosperity, and the repeated police brutality has created formidable social conditions that “minorities” are disproportionately faced with. Those who live in the *banlieues* are at a disadvantage compared to those living in more affluent or urban areas, and subsequently they are marginalized as a whole community based on geography and not capability. How do the physical boundaries create a disadvantage and how do these divisions affect their quality of life and opportunities available to them just across the “border”?

Argument

Geographic boundaries are the main source of marginalization in France, and although race’s physical attributes make it easier to direct prejudice, the lack of government information about race, ethnic, or religious statistics, makes geographic targeting of potential aid, or more common, political scapegoating, relatively easier. Race plays an important role in the creation of these divides, as those of Maghrebi or Black descent were the primary first inhabitants of the *banlieues*.¹⁹ Therefore the historical roots of these neighborhoods, as immigrant housing, has influenced the continued marginalization of those within, despite their ascription to the necessary qualifications to be considered French. The physical boundaries they are faced with when wanting to enter metropolitan French culture, the limited economic opportunities available to them within their communities, and the preceding negative reputation that is seemingly bonded to them, because of the historical racial populations found in the area, marginalizes those within

¹⁹ Kenza Sijelmassi, "A cross cultural comparison of the creation of ghettos and their perpetuation in American and French society: with a focus on Washington, D.C. and Clichy-sous-Bois" (Master's thesis, Ursinus College, 2013), April 16, 2013, 19, accessed October 1, 2017, https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/32244713/A_cross_cultural_comparison_of_the_creation_of_ghettos_and_their_perpetuation_in_American_and_French_society_with_a_focus_on_Washington.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&Expires=1506914330&Signature=Xgb%2BvpQ1bkJ69ImAo7rJk7TVdTY%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DA_cross_cultural_comparison_of_the_creat.pdf.

the *banlieues* and discounts them economic and social mobility that should be equally afforded to all.

Methods and Design

This paper seeks to expose the parts of French society that have allowed for the continued disenfranchisement of minorities, especially in the *banlieues*. It aims to evaluate the quality of life in these neighborhoods and how they affect potential opportunities for the residents. Through discourse analysis of narratives shared by people that have lived in the *banlieues* and faced discrimination because of it, this paper will make clear the distinct impediments to success and the continued dilapidating conditions in the *banlieues* that cannot be fixed without social and economic interventions. This paper will also visually analyze the map of Paris and its suburbs and the Paris metro and RER map to illustrate how the physical boundaries that people who live in the *banlieues* face and how they are an integral part to the continued disenfranchisement of the less fortunate who seek social and economic mobility but cannot attain it. By using a critical lense to look at the structures that exist, the analysis will show how the boundaries are discouraging growth and mobility while also dilating the emotional traumas faced by those within the suburbs.

The narratives that I will analyze are from interviews that were conducted by journalists and then subsequently published in magazines such as TIME. Although I did not conduct the interview myself, I found this method more reliable when considering language implications and notable magazine's ability to better translate than I. These articles do not analyze the stories that are being told but simply look to share them, which is why it was possible to analyze them

within the paper without too many unknown biases. Within the discourse analysis of the data it will be necessary to code similar conclusions that the speakers create. While considering the different experiences that those who live in the banlieue have, the feelings of discrimination described in the narratives are divided by “location” and “physical distinctions.” Although they will both be used in the study concurrently, it gave this analysis another opportunity to see the parallels between what people face based on their geography and what discriminatory acts they attribute to their race, ethnicity, or religion. Keywords and themes used to connect narratives include: discrimination, loss, difference, divisions, foreigner/immigrant, distance, alienation, and societal shortcomings. These keywords will be used to emphasize the shared sentiments of those who know how they have been disenfranchised because of where they live. The manually coding that was used on the narratives have been translated in the analysis to general themes to be analyzed and discussed. These stories have been included to reflect the emotional barriers those who live on the outside face when trying to leave or simply overcome their disadvantages. Using narratives as a means of analysis provide more anecdotal evidence of racism and its ultimate effects on real people.

Within the visual analysis of Parisian maps, this paper seeks to demonstrate the lack of or difficult connections between the periphery (*banlieues*) and the core (metropolitan Paris). Maps that will be used in this paper include the road map of France, the Réseau Express Régional (RER) map, which is the commuter train line in France, and the pricing structure found to take the RER all taken from the Parisien transit authority’s website. In order to find solutions to remedy the problems being faced due to the geographic barriers, it is key to first target a strong source of contention which can then begin the process of finding a path to advancement. This

portion of analysis will be looked at on an ad hoc basis, rather than finding similarities, it will be important to exploit the weaknesses of Paris as a community found in the maps. In order to augment the divisions found in the visual analysis this paper will introduce statistics that shows the divisions within one city which are potentially caused by geographic barriers. Visual analysis gives concrete examples of issues that those in the *banlieues* have to overcome to complete daily errands. It shows the exact places where there is a discrepancy between geographic areas and, through the discussion, offers opportunities for things to be improved.

Data Analysis

Paris has, since the 12th century, been encircled by city walls. Commissioned by various French leaders, the walls have been rebuilt to keep the residents safe.²⁰ The newest wall however, disguised by the necessity for autoroute travel, is more about keeping those on the fringes on the social outside than keeping those within the wall safe. “The Thiers fortifications were dismantled between 1919 and 1929 and the newly available land was used for subsidized housing. Today, the boulevard périphérique ringing Paris since 1973 marks a break between the city and adjacent areas as radical as any of the walls of the past.”²¹ The current wall is also called boulevard peripherique, and it is a highway autoroute that entirely encircles the city of Paris, effectively cutting off and metropolitan growth while also marginalizing the communities on the outside.

Perhaps one of the easiest ways to see the complete division of metropolitan Paris from its suburbs is the road map. Shown in Figure 1, this boldy shows the boulevard peripherique (the

²⁰ "PARIS from A to Z." Paris...à pied, les yeux ouverts, le nez en l'air ou l'architecture dans tous ses détails. Accessed December 05, 2017. <https://www.parisapied.net/A%20abecedaire.htm>.

²¹ “Paris from A to Z”

large yellow line that encompasses the city) and how it totally encircles the entirety of the city. Similar to US highways, this road is many lanes in each direction with cars moving at faster speeds, without traffic control lights. These factors make these roads completely untraversable, indicated by Figure 2 and the road conditions seen in the image. Clichy-Sous-Bois, one of the most controversial *banlieues* is right on the Northwest border of the peripherique, but it is still cut off from Parisien culture and demonized by those within because of the limited opportunities the residents have to cross the highway border.



Figure 1²²

²² Paris, Google maps



Figure 2²³

The creation of this highway border of France has created limited and specific entry points to be used by residents of the *banlieues* to enter Paris. As with any city, public transportation plays a huge role in allowing those on the outside to commute into the city with relative lower costs than travelling on their own. However, there is still an unequal aspect to the public transportation available to those on outskirts. In Figure 3, the RER map is displayed with the different travel zones and the stops in each of them. Looking at Figure 4, the prices for the weekly and monthly RER and metro passes, in comparison, there is a clear disencouragement on a transit standpoint for those on the outside to enter in Paris. 2,95 euros weekly, 10 euros monthly, or 110 euros yearly difference for those who live in zones 4 or 5 to just travel in their own area and coming into the city bounds. This may seem like little monetary value difference to someone who has disposable income, but for those who live in the *banlieues* it could mean a serious lifestyle change in order to afford travel. The choice to make the price different is what points to the marginalization of those on the outside. The zones are not equal sized from the core.

²³ The Paris boulevard peripherique were it intersects with Paris roadways. Interchange with A3 at Porte de Bagnole. Digital image. Drive Europe News. July 25, 2013.
https://driveeuropenews.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/echangeur_periph-pte-bagnolet_01233.jpg.

The circles are augmented to allow for more space to be accounted for in the south than in the north; therefore the price differences are not in order to subsidize the extra cost to travel more. As if the long train rides in order to get into the city and the irregularity of the train stops were not enough hassle for those who live in the *banlieues*, the state is not willing to supplement the extra cost for those residents to have more access to the city for an equal price to their own suburbs.

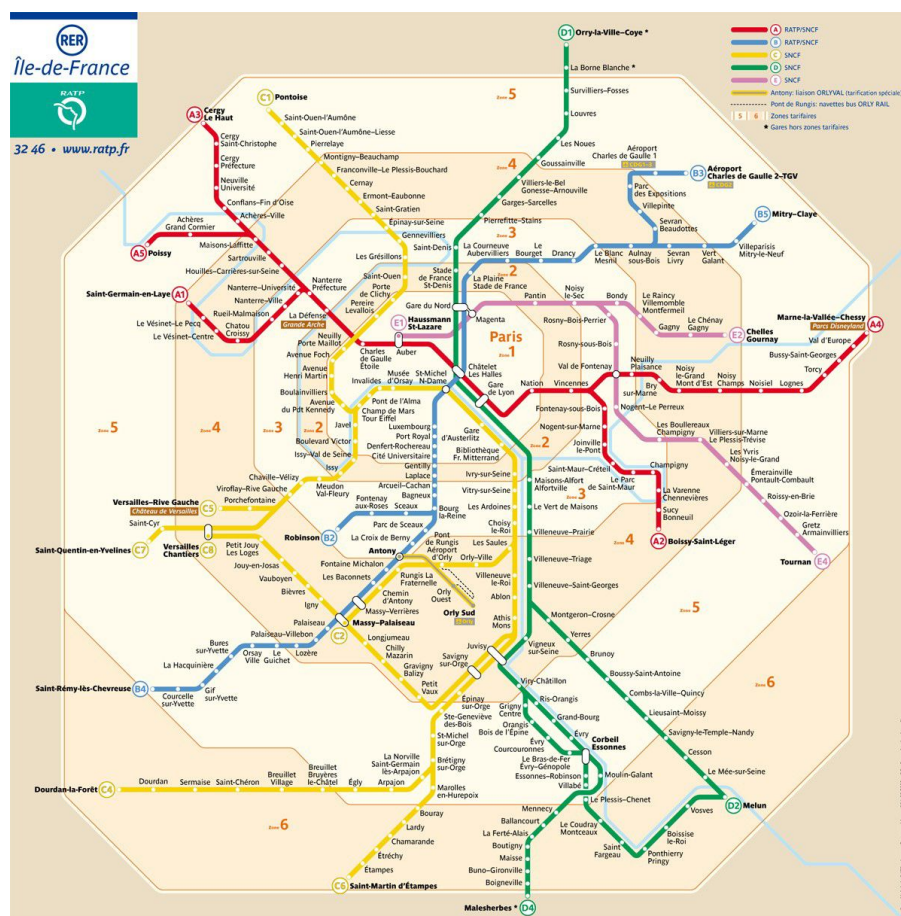


Figure 3²⁴

²⁴ "RER and Transiliens map." Digital image. RATP Maps. Accessed December 05, 2017. <https://www.ratp.fr/en/plans-lignes/plan-rer-et-transiliens>.

Zones	Navigo Weekly	Navigo Monthly
All zones	22,80€	75,20€
2-3	20,85€	68,60€
3-4	20,20€	66,80€
4-5	19,85€	65,20€

Figure 4²⁵

Looking at the maps is an important aspect of this research in order to understand what the actual physical boundaries look like and how they stop those in the *banlieues* from easily permeating Parisien culture. Now that it is clear how space reinforces the disenfranchisement of those in the suburbs, it is important to analyze how the residents then experience it.

Much of the narratives that speak to alienation also speak to the theme of labelling of immigrant. The discourse in the *banlieues* is focused on the social divisions within as well. Although these feelings do not always manifest themselves into specific economic shortfalls, the sense of alienation aids to the continued division between core and periphery which exacerbates, down the road, the distinctive characteristics that allow for those within the core to capitalize on and then to exclude those who do not match their mold. These feelings of misunderstanding and passed judgement are described by the narrative of Aadam who feels no allegiance to the French soccer team and is shamed by society for his Moroccan jersey.²⁶ The rebellious nature of *banlieue* youth to cling to their, however distant, ethnic heritage, gives way to the negative

²⁵"Navigo annual travel pass fares - RATP." RATP : Demandez-nous la ville (retour à l'accueil). Accessed December 05, 2017. <https://www.ratp.fr/en/titres-et-tarifs/navigo-annual-travel-pass>.

²⁶ Chloe Duflo and Nathanaelle Quenet, "A Grey Hope: Thin Territorial Identity among French Suburban Youth in Garges and Sarcelles," Knowledge and Action, , accessed October 02, 2017, <https://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledgebase/202-a-grey-hope-thin-territorial-identity-among-french-suburban-youth-in-garges-and-sarcelles>.

political discourse used to delegitimize them as members of French society, and at times use them as a figurehead for blame, which typically then extends to the entire community, as seen by the vilification of rioters in Clichy-Sous-Bois in response to the death, caused by police, of a young adult.

Another theme that is explored in the narratives is “othering.” The physical exclusions that those in the *banlieues* face have stunted their ability to take part in a culture they have attempted to embrace. The mayor of the suburb Grigny has this to say “Residents of Grigny absorb exclusion into their identity. They think they’re outsiders because that’s the way they’re treated.”²⁷ It is a constant in their lives that is exacerbated by the physical boundaries they must overcome first in order to then consider themselves Parisien or French.

The discrimination against those who live in the *banlieues* when it comes to trying to get a job is undeniable. Despite the passing of the 1972 law banning discrimination in the workplace, it is a well known fact that the address on your CV can determine the likelihood of getting a job.²⁸ Despite working for the French government, Brahim’s job counsellor advised him to get a post office box within the city limits to put on his resume to increase his chances, however the feelings of discrimination and difference did not stop at his address but also included the suggestion to artfully shorten his name as to not sound too Arab.²⁹ Kevin faced the same predicament. It was evident that the employer was furrowing his brow at his use of *banlieue*

²⁷ Kimmelman, Michael. "Paris Aims to Embrace Its Estranged Suburbs." New York Times, February 13, 2015, A1 sec. February 12, 2015. Accessed September 29, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/13/world/europe/paris-tries-to-embrace-suburbs-isolated-by-poverty-and-race.html?mcubz=1>.

²⁸ Erik Bleich, "Race Policy in France," Brookings, July 28, 2016, , accessed October 01, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/race-policy-in-france/>.

²⁹ George Packer, "The Other Paris: Are the suburbs of Paris incubators of terrorism?" The New Yorker, September 03, 2017, , accessed October 01, 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/08/31/the-other-france>.

slang, and the employer's suspicions were solved when the CV showed he lived in the Garges suburb.³⁰

Despite many acts of discrimination being perpetrated in these narratives are against those of a different ethnicity, the alienation and divisions felt by those in the *banlieues* do not end with those who are Black or Arab. Slimane Zeghidour gives his perspective on where divisions are creating in French society. “There is a very strong prejudice of class that is translated to a stigmatization of people living on the outskirts of big cities, who in large part are immigrants or the children of immigrants from Maghreb or Africa, but white people who live in these places are not better off.”³¹ The divisions between elite and those who are poor recreate themselves in the power structures throughout French society. The creation of the *banlieues* have been considered a quasi segregation that the French used during the mass immigrations of the 1960s. The racial discrimination that manifested itself in Parisien culture has now permeated economic standing, where those in Paris are so racially blind they began to lump in the poor to be discriminated at the same time. The shortcomings that come along this are limited access to strong economic institutions and concurrently job security, limited social interactions alongside inadequate social networks, and the continued feeling of alienation is wrapped tightly around those constrained to the barriers of the *banlieue*.³²

Despite living in different towns, surrounded by different people, with changes in their daily routine, many of the narratives that describe life in *banlieues* and the attempts to escape

³⁰ Duflo, A Grey Hope, (2006).

³¹ Natalie Handel, "Racism in France: It's Not About Skin Color," Frenchly, August 12, 2016, , accessed September 29, 2017, <https://frenchly.us/racism-france-not-skin-color/>.

³² Packer, (2015).

them shared many similarities, almost always ending in the same way, another lost opportunity. Individual stories have more comparisons that can be drawn between people, which creates an aggregate story of minorities in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Analyzing these shows the real time effects of a divisive culture, of “us vs them” “real vs learned french” and the “have and have nots,” that considers itself ethnically/racially “blind.”

These stories might have never happened if it hadn’t been for the boundaries drawn between people living in the *banlieues*, their populations growing in immigrants, and those wealthy enough to leave who wanted to preserve their Français de Souche lineage. Now these divisions have allowed for the *banlieues* to fall apart without notice and the economic opportunities to advance wither away into the distance.

Something unable to be addressed in this analysis of the data is the level of integration between those within the cities boundaries and those without. Dixon (2001) speaks to the importance of interactions among groups to augment mutual understand and relationships.³³ Therefore the level of cross-communication a person has with someone of the opposite status will increase their likelihood of sympathizing with the others’ situation and the desire to find mutual benefiting social structures. Therefore the ability for someone within the *banlieues* to hold connections outside will ultimately benefit their ability to find economic or social opportunities not available to those within their home community, and conversely the more interactions that someone, holding privilege while on the inside, has with a marginalized person the weaker the influence negative reputations will have on their perceptions of people outside

³³ John Dixon, "Contact and Boundaries: Locating the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations," *Theory & Psychology* 11, no. 5 (2001): 588-589, doi:10.1177/0959354301115001.

their status. The need to leave the *banlieues* for more plentiful and meaningful opportunities is shown through the narrative of Imene Ouissi, who was always held back in her studies because of the education available to her in the suburbs. After a teacher fought for her to be placed in a lycee (preparatory high school) she went on to pass her BAC (an important test for French students to be accepted to university), an opportunity she might have never been afforded if she stayed in her original school.³⁴ However, this particular variable is hard to account for in existing sources, and the collection of this data would be faced with many flaws in that people do not usually want to admit their isolationist tendencies, or their lack of understanding on what is going on around them. Therefore this factor can only be considered faintly and abstractly when coming to conclusions about the role of boundaries in marginalization.

Limitations

There are many problems that this study faced while trying to better understand the *banlieues* and the people inside of them and subsequently many limitations on the ultimate conclusion of this paper; these included language limitations, non-biased newspaper accounts, and the author's American ideology that influenced the analytical framework used. Despite these shortcomings, it is imperative to note that this does not diminish the importance of continued research and analysis of the disenfranchisement of those within the *banlieues*. As violence erupts in these alienated areas, the political gravity of finding a solution to the years of discrimination grows stronger.

³⁴ Astier, Henri. "The women of France's banlieues." The BBC, August 24, 2016. Accessed December 05, 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37103628>.

The continued problems facing those in the *banlieues* can be addressed at any time by the government, however it requires the desire by the President to bring about a solution. As France just underwent a change in administrations, the discourse around the *banlieues* and the next steps to address them could change, especially with Emmanuel Macron's focus on economic advancement in his Presidential goals. Therefore, the economic and social restrictions of those in *banlieues* could be on the way to being solved in the next five years. Therefore the continued monitoring of the situation, and a serious call to action to all those in power, by those facing discrimination and the educated people that hold the privilege, is necessary in order to effectively meet the needs of the marginalized people.

One limitation in implementing any changes in order to address the concerns discussed in the paper, is the lack of collective action among the individuals affects. It is a necessity to find strength in numbers in order to create change. The *banlieues* were able to come together in retaliation to police brutality in 2005, however someone should not have to die each time in order to provoke the community into taking action to spark deserved changed. It will be necessary for those looking to find solutions to also look at the divisions within communities and how those will impede on social change.

Something that will be important moving forward in this niche of race or cultural studies is applying these ideas in other geographic settings across France. These problems are not only Parisien, and it is important that the state begins to realize and take ownership of its role that marginalized so many people and its responsibility to embrace the different cultures that have permeated French society in the past 70 years. Therefore continued academic discussions are

necessary to draw out the key problems that are shared among communities and how they can be effectively addressed in the French cultural standpoint.

Conclusion

The physical boundaries, namely the peripherique autoroute, that are integrated into the the geographic set-up of the city of Paris have a decisive effect on the opportunities available to those that live outside, namely in *banlieues*. The historical context of the creation of *banlieues* and the racial marginalization and the subsequent social divisions that exist among the French, namely between those of different ethnicities despite their nationalities being the same, began with the migration of former colonial states' people to France. The second class status afforded to them as immigrants has not been removed despite the many generations being born in France. The grouping of these people in *banlieues* because of the necessity of quick housing, has created a reputation of those in the *banlieues* that disenfranchises them from becoming involved and fully embracing French society. The high levels of unemployment, the diminished economic opportunities, and the weak social connections can all be attributed to the lingering racism, and now geographic prejudice, that comes with living in the *banlieues*. The social hardships these residents face, whether it be from racial or economic discrimination, are only exacerbated by the physical boundaries that keep them from being a contributing part to Parisien culture and bookmark them as someone of a lower status. There are many issues that have contributed to the creation of these divisive atmosphere in Paris, but moving forward it is necessary to begin to embrace the diversity of Paris and what ALL its residents have to offer.

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